

**Listing of Claims:**

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1. (Cancelled)

2. (Previously amended) The process according to claim 13, wherein the soil is treated by mixing the compound into the soil.

3. (Previously amended) The process according to claim 2, wherein the compound is added in the amount of 0.1 to 2.5% by weight.

4. (Previously amended) The process according to claim 3, wherein the compound is added in the amount of 0.5 to 2.0% by weight.

5. (Previously amended) The process according to claim 13, wherein the cross-linked poly(meth)acrylates are produced by a method comprising polymerizing monoethylenically unsaturated monocarboxylic acids.

6. (Previously amended) The process according to claim 13, wherein the poly(meth)acrylates are produced by a method comprising polymerizing monoethylenically unsaturated monomers containing no carboxylate groups.

7. (Currently amended) The process according to claim 5, wherein the poly(meth)acrylates are cross linked by a cross-linking agent selected from the a group consisting of methylenbis(meth)acrylamide, ethylenbis(meth)acrylamide, N-methylolacrylamide, or triallylamine and combinations thereof.

8. (Previously amended) The process according to claim 5, wherein the poly(meth)acrylates are treated with a subsequent cross-linking agent in quantities of 0.01 to 10% by weight, at a temperature between 80 and 250 °C.

9. (Previously amended) The process according to claim 5, wherein monoethylenically unsaturated monocarboxylic acids are neutralized between 10 and 95 mol percent.

Preliminary Amendment

10. (Previously amended) The process according to claim 5, wherein the poly(meth)acrylates have an absorption capacity for synthetic soil solution of more than 30 g/g of the poly(meth)acrylates.

11. (Previously amended) The process according to claim 5, wherein the poly(meth)acrylates are worked into the contaminated soil up to a depth of about 50 cm.

12. (Cancelled)

13. (Currently amended) A process for reducing the presence of heavy metals in plants growing in soil contaminated with heavy metals, comprising: applying to the contaminated soil where the plant grows a heavy metal reducing effective amount of a compound selected from the group consisting of cross-linked polyacrylates and polymethacrylates.

14. (Previously added) The process according to claim 5, wherein the monocarboxylic acid is acrylic acid or its salts.

15. (previously added) The process according to claim 6, wherein the monoethylenically unsaturated monomer is acrylamide.

16. (Previously amended) The process according to claim 7, wherein the cross-linking agent is methylenebisacrylamide.

17. (Cancelled)

18. (Previously amended) The process according to claim 9, wherein the monoethylenically unsaturated monocarboxylic acids are neutralized between 50 and 90 mol percent.

19. (Previously amended) The process according to claim 10, wherein the absorption capacity is more than 50 g/g of the poly(meth)acrylates.

20. (Previously amended) The process according to claim 10, wherein the absorption capacity is more than 65 g/g of the poly(meth)acrylates.